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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2788  
INFO RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/CJCS WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 000271

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/24/2019  
TAGS: [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [NATO](#) [PINS](#) [PREL](#) [NL](#)  
SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS/JSF: COMPROMISE WINS

REF: HAGUE 264

Classified By: Political Deputy Eric Falls for reasons 1.5 (b...

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11. (C) Summary: Political grandstanding by parliamentarians opposed to the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) program gave way to a late-night announcement of a compromise during the second day of debates. At the invitation of Parliament, cabinet members, including PM Balkenende, responded to questions on the floor of the Parliament. The Dutch will proceed with the acquisition of one test aircraft and will delay the decision to purchase operational aircraft until 2012, but the Labor party has been damaged from the debate. End Summary.

12. (SBU) COMPROMISE: At the beginning of the evening debate on April 23, the Labor Party (PvdA) floorleader put forth a joint resolution by the governing coalition that was obviously the result of a high level compromise. The resolution, approved by parliament at the end of debate, stated: "... that the choice to participate in the operational test phase is not a definitive choice for the JSF; ... (we) limit the decision process at this moment to making commitments ..for the first ... test aircraft... the final choice for participation in the test phase may be made in 2010 ... a decision made be made for termination... on the basis of ... pricing, (aircraft) noise ... and the outcome of arbitration of the business case ... a final procurement decision on production aircraft will be taken in 2012."

13. (C) POLITICAL REACTION: PM Balkenende was satisfied with the compromise as it permits the Netherlands to continue to participate in the test phase ""and it is the result that counts."" State Secretary De Vries stated that ""the approach that has been chosen fits into the previous agreements on the

orders."" Christian Democrats floorleader Pieter Van Geel emphasized that this commitment is ""an important signal to the partners and industry."" The opposition claimed that they ""scored on the point that the final decision is delayed until 2012.""

¶4. (C) COMMENT: Both sides have claimed victory but the primary spoils must go to the supporters of JSF. The Dutch have taken another step that continues their engagement as partners in the JSF program. The PvdA has been ridiculed in the press, and the party may now be on the hunt for victories elsewhere. Opposition to the JSF Program in the Netherlands will continue to be vigorous, but maturation of the JSF program and firmer cost estimates will support proponents.  
END COMMENT.

GALLAGHER